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ABSTRACT

A survey of the status of language usage in South Africa begins with an overview of the distribution among the population of the official languages, Afrikaans and English, and the principle languages of the Black majority: Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Nothern Sotho (Pedi), Southern Sotho, Tsonga, Swazi, and Venda. The influence of apartheid policy on language use and the development of bilingualism are outlined. A matrix follows that rates each of the languages on: (1) their usage rating using State Department classifications; (2) increase and decrease trends by the year 2000; (3) chief of state use in addressing the populace; (4) use in armed forces, government, court, and diplomatic communications, written and oral; (5) use as a language of instruction or required language in higher education, on the secondary and elementary levels, and in adult education; (6) use in the popular press, radio and television broadcasting, and film; (7) business and professional use, written and oral; (8) use in intellectual circles; (9) the alphabet situation; (10) their status in literature; (11) use in public signs and notices; and (12) the availability of instructional materials and dictionaries for use by English speakers. Explanatory notes give the number and population percentages using the languages, the type of alphabets used, and specific instructional material titles. A selected bibliography is also included. (MSE)

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Language/Area Reference Center

COUNTRY STATUS REPORT:

SOUTH AFRICA

September, 1984

Prepared by:

Margaret McFerren

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Center for Applied Linguistics
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Country Status Reports
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South Africa - 1, Overview

The official languages of South Africa are Afrikaans and English, which together are spoken by less than 20% of the population. The principal languages of South Africa's Black majority are Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Northern Sotho (Pedi), Southern Sotho, Tsonga, Swazi and Venda, all of which have been standardized in the roman script since the 19th and early 20th centuries, with the exception of Swazi which was not standardized until the 1970's.

With regards to the official uses of language, English and Afrikaans are constitutionally guaranteed equal status and a special government department has been established to ensure equal use at least in written communications. As a result of Afrikaner political dominance since 1948, however, the language most often used among the police, in the prisons, in the military and in government departments (in spite of a strict bilingual requirement for entry into the civil service) is Afrikaans. Yet, while Afrikaans is more prominent in the coercive and civil service branches of South African administration, English is clearly the more visible language in commerce and in the professions, in the educational system of English-speaking whites and in the education of Blacks (Bantu Education). The government-monitored South African Broadcasting Corporation is Afrikaner-run, yet Afrikaans and English are given equal treatment at least in the production of news programs on both television and radio, and special television and radio channels broadcast in the Bantu languages alone. Of the Bantu languages considered here, Zulu, Xhosa, Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho (Pedi), Tswana, Tsonga and Venda are used in radio broadcasts, while Xhosa, Zulu, Tswana, Northern Sotho and Southern Sotho are used in television broadcasts.

The principal legacy of nearly four decades of Afrikaner rule in South Africa is the policy of apartheid under which the rights of South African citizenship are denied to all nonwhites and individuals are divided along racial lines, and in the case of the Blacks, futher along tribal and ethnolinguistic lines. The creation of the Bantu homelands meant the resettlement of millions of Blacks into areas where they would be separated by tribe and linguistic group. Four of the ten homelands have been granted independence, and in these, tribal languages are used officially alongside Afrikaans or English or both. In Bophuthatswana, Tswana is used officially; in Ciskei, the official languages are Xhosa and English; in Transkei, the official language is Xhosa, although Sotho, Afrikaans and English are used for judicial, legislative and administrative purposes; and finally, the official languages of Venda are Venda, English and Afrikaans. Although South Africa has declared these homelands "independent", they remain economically and politically dependent on South Africa, and are not recognized as nation states internationally. Language use in these homelands, thus, is considered as local language use on the Language Use Matrix.

Separate systems of education for Afrikaans- and English-speaking whites are geared toward the production of functional bilinguals. A separate system of education was created for Blacks (Bantu Education) in which the mother tongue was to be the medium of instruction, switching to one of the official languages in secondary school, producing only minimal ability in one of the official languages. This was eventually changed to mother tongue through Standard 2, and one of the official languages thereafter. The choice of official language was almost always English, as Afrikaans is seen as the language of the oppressor. In 1974, a law was passed requiring the Black secondary school student to study via both Afrikaans and English, and the forced implementation of this ruling in 1976 led to school riots, first in Soweto, and finally spreading to all parts of the country. The government subsequently backed down from enforced Afrikaans-medium courses, and most Black secondary schools now operate almost entirely via English. The universities created for South Africa's Blacks are all English-medium.

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South Africa - 2, Matrix

SOUTH AFRICA

Languages

Factoids	Afrikaans	English	Zulu	Xhosa	Tswana	No. Sotho	So. Sotho	Tsonga	Swazi	Venda
1. Usage rating*	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
2. Increase/decrease	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3. Chief of State use?	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Armed Forces/written	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Armed Forces/oral	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Government/written	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. Government/oral, national	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. Government/oral, local	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
9. Court/written	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10. Court/oral	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
11. Diplomatic use?	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12. Higher education	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13. Higher ed: required?	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Secondary education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
15. Secondary: required?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
16. Primary education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
17. Primary: required?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
18. Adult education	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
19. Popular press use	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	?	3
20. Transmission across borders?	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
21. Use in radio broadcasting	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2
22. Use in TV broadcasting	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0
23. Use in film	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24. Business/professional/written	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25. Business/professional/oral	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
26. Use in intellectual circles	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27. Alphabet situation*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
28. Status of literature	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	?	0	2
29. Use in signs?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	?	1
30. Teaching materials*	2	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
31. Bilingual dictionaries*	1	-	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Notes:

Numbers are explained on following pages

? = information unavailable within time frame of project

- = not applicable

* = footnotes on following pages

1. 1984 ESTIMATES, NUMBERS OF NATIVE SPEAKERS

Language	Number of Native Speakers	Percentage of Population
Afrikaans	4,153,000	13.1%
English	1,744,000	5.5%
Both Afrikaans and English	1,490,000	4.7%
Zulu	5,167,000	16.3%
Xhosa	4,787,000	15.1%
Tswana	2,092,000	6.6%
Northern Sotho (Pedi)	1,934,000	6.1%
Southern Sotho	1,775,000	5.6%
Tsonga	888,000	2.8%
Swazi	602,000	1.9%
Venda	444,000	1.4%

27. TYPE OF ALPHABET USED

Language	Alphabet
Afrikaans	Roman
English	Roman
Zulu	Roman
Xhosa	Roman
Tswana	Roman
Northern Sotho (Pedi)	Roman
Southern Sotho	Roman
Tsonga	Roman
Swazi	Roman
Venda	Roman

30. TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Language	Texts
Afrikaans	Terblanche, H.J. Teach Yourself Afrikaans. 1st ed. Bloemfontein, South Africa: J. de Villkiers, 1976.
	Holloway, Frederick G. Painless Afrikaans. Cape Town, South Africa: Juta, 1975.

30. TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS, cont.

Language	Texts
Afrikaans	Groenewald, Pieter W. J. Learn to Speak Afrikaans: A New Method Based on 1,000 Words. Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Shuter and Shooter, 1972.
	Potgieter, Dirk J. and A. Geldenhuys. Afrikaans for English-Speaking Students, 5th ed. Cape Town, South Africa: Juta, 1954-60.
Zulu	Cope, Anthony T. Zulu: A Comprehensive Course in The Zulu Language. Durban, South Africa: University of Natal, Department of Zulu Language and Literature, 1982.
	Rycrohoff and Ngeobo. Say It in Zulu. London, England: London University, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1981.
	Nyembi, Cyril L.S. Learn Zulu. 4th rev. ed. Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Shuter and Shooter, 1972.
Xhosa	Riordan, J. et al. Lumko Xhosa Self-Instruction. Grahamstown, South Africa: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, 1969.
	. Xhosa Language Laboratory Course. Lumku, Cape Province, South Africa: Center for Language and Cultural Studies, Missiological Institute, 1967.
	Jordan, Archibald Curie. A Practical Course in Xhosa. Cape Town, South Africa: Longmans, Green and Co., 1966
Tswana	Hopkins, David B. Communication and Culture Handbook. (Peace Corps Language Handbook Series) Brattleboro, VT: The Experiment Press, 1979.
	Herbert, Raymond J. and Paulus M. Mahome. Elementary Spoken Tswana. Washington, DC: Institute of Modern Lan-Languages, 1966.
	Cole, D.T. and Dingaan Mpho Mokaila. A Course in Tswana. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1962.

30. TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS, cont.

Language	Texts
Northern Sotho (Pedi)	Ziervogel, Dirk, D.P. Leonard and P.C. Mokgokong. A Handbook of The Northern Sotho Language. Pretoria, South Africa: J.L. van Schaik, 1969.
	Learn to Speak Northern Sotho. (Series of African Languages, No. 5). Stellenbosch, South Africa: Tegnidisc, n.d.
Southern Sotho	Demuth, Katherine, and Tholoana Sekhesa. Basic seSotho An Oral Approach. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, African Studies Program, 1978.
	Kok, Christiaan R. and L.C. Botha. Let us Speak Southern Sotho, Afrikaans. Kaapstad, South Africa: Juta, 1976.
	Nussbaum, Loren V. and Gershom T. Lijane. An Introduction to Spoken seSotho. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1968.

31. BILINGUAL DICTIONARIES FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Language	Texts
Afrikaans	Kritzinger, Matthys, S.B. comp. Groot Woordeboek: Afrikaans-Engels, English-Afrikaans; 12th ed. Pretoria, South Africa: J.L. Van Schaik, 1981.
	. Handy Dictionary: English-Afrikaans; Handige Woordeboek: Afrikaans-Engels, 1976.
	Terblanche, H.J. New Practical Dictionary: English-Afrikaans, Afrikaans-English. 5th ed. Johannesburg, South Africa: Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, 1966.
Zulu	Doke, Clement M., D. Mck. Malcolm and J.M.A. Sikakana. English and Zulu Dictionary. Johannesburg, South Africa: Witwatersrand University Press, 1977.

31. BILINGUAL DICTIONARIES FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS, Cont.

Language	Texts
Zulu	Dent, George R. and Cyril L.S. Nyembezi, comps. Scholar's Zulu Dictionary; English-Zulu, Zulu-English. Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Shuter and Shooter, 1969.
	Dent, George R. Compact Zulu Dictionary: English-Zulu, Zulu-English. 2nd ed. (Edited by Cyril Nyembezi) Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Central News Agency, 1962.
Xhosa	Fischer, A. (ed.) Lumko English/Xhosa Dictionary. Fairlawn, New Jersey: Oxford University Press, 1981.
	Dictionary; English-Xhosa, Xhosa-English. Cape Town, South Africa: Via Afrika, 1969.
	McLaren, J. and W.G. Bennie. A New Concise Xhosa-English Dictionary. Rev. ed. Cape Town, South Africa: Longmans, Greeen and Co., 1963.
Tswana	Brown, John. Secwana Dictionary: English-Secwana and Secwana-English. London, England, 1962.
Northern Sotho (Pedi)	Kriel, T.J. Popular Northern Sotho Dictionary: N. Sotho-English, English-N. Sotho. 2nd ed. Pretoria, South Africa: J.L van Schaik, 1976.
	Ziervogel, Dirk and P.C. Mokgokong, comps. Comprehensive Northern Sotho Dictionary: Northern Sotho/Afrikaans/English. Pretoria, South Africa: J.L. van Schaik, 1975.
Southern Sotho	Casalis, Alfred. English-Sotho Vocabulary, 11th ed. Morija, Lesotho: Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 1981.
	Christeller, Suzanne. English-Sotho, Sotho-English Pocket Dictionary. Morija, Lesotho: Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 1966.
	Hamel, L. English-Southern Sotho Dictionary. Mazenod, Lesotho: The Catholic Centre, 1965.

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Grundy, Kenneth P. Soldiers without Politics; Blacks in The South African Armed Forces. Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA and London, England: University of California Press, 1982.

Hirson, Baruch. "Language in Control and Resistance in South Africa," African Affairs, 80:319:219-37, 1982.

Klima, Vladimir, Karel Frantisek Ruzicka andd Petr Zima. Black Africa; Literature and Language. Dordecht, Holland; Boston, MA: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1976.

Lanham, L.W. and K.P. Prinsloo (eds). Language and Communication Studies in South Africa. Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press, 1978.

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Marcum, John A. Education, Race and Social Change in South Africa. Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA and London, England: University of California Press, 1982.

Nyaggah, Mougo. "Apartheid and Second-Class Education in South Africa," in Nyaggah and Agripah T. Mugomba (eds.). Independence without Freedom: The Political Economy of Colonial Education in Southern Africa. Santa Barbara, CA and London, England: ABC-Clio, 1980.

"Rebusoajoang". "Education and Social Control in South Africa," African Affairs, 78:311:228-39, April 1979.

Republic of South Africa. South Africa, 1984; Official Yearbook of The Republic of South Africa. Johannesburg, South Africa: Chris von Rensburg Publications, 1984.

South Africa and Zimbabwe: The Freest Press in Africa? A report by the Committee to Protect Journalists. New York, NY: Committee to Protect Journalists, March 1983.

Switzer, Les and Donna. The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho. Boston, MA: G.K. Hall and Co., 1979.

van der Horst, Sheila and Jane Reid (eds.). Race Discrimination in South Africa. Cape Town, South Africa: David Phillip, Publisher. London: Rex Collings, 1981.

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - a

1. Usage rating, using the State Department classifications
   1: Official language, most widely used.
   2: Official language, not most widely used.
   3: Widely used language, but not official. (Over 10% of population)
   4: Unofficial language used by significant minority (but less than 3)
   5: Unofficial language used by influential minority
      FOOTNOTE: NUMBERS OF SPEAKERS, PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION

2. Increase/decrease trends by the year 2000
   1: Number of native speakers will increase in proportion
   2: Number of native speakers will remain proportionally constant
   3: Number of native speakers will decrease in proportion

3. Chief of State use, in addressing populace: YES (1) NO (0)

4. Armed Forces written communications
   1: Only language used in official communiques
   2: One of the languages used in official communiques
   0: Not used in official communiques

5. Armed Forces oral communications
   1: Used on all levels
   2: Used among officers only
   3: Used among multi-lingual NCO's and troops
   4: Used among monolingual troops only
   0: Not used

6. Written government communications
   1: Only language used in official communications
   2: One of the languages used in official communications
   0: Not used in official communications

7. Oral government communications/national level
   1: Official language spoken in national assembly
   2: One of the official languages spoken in national assembly
   0: Not used in government

8. Oral government communications/local level
   1: Official language in local government
   2: One of the official languages used in local government
   3: Allowed in local government proceedings, translated into official language
   0: Not used in local government

9. Court use in written communications
   1: Only language used in official communications
   2: One of the languages used in official communications
   0: Not used

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - b

10. Court use in oral communications
    1: Only official language used in court
    2: One of the official languages used in court
    3: Allowed in courts, translated into official language(s)
    0: Not used in courts

11. Diplomatic use in notes to other countries: YES (1) NO (0)

12. Use in higher education
    1: Official medium of instruction
    2: Unofficial medium of instruction
    0: Not used

13. Language taught as subject in required courses in higher education:
    YES (1) NO (0)

14. Use in secondary education
    1: Official medium of instruction
    2: Unofficial medium of instruction
    0: Not used as medium of instruction

15. Language taught as subject in required courses on secondary level?
    YES (1) NO (0)

16. Use in primary education
    1: Official medium of instruction
    2: Unofficial medium of instruction
    0: Not used as medium of instruction

17. Language taught as subject in required courses on primary level?
    YES (1) NO (0)

18. Language use in adult education
    1: Used in oral and written technical instruction
    2: Used in oral and written life skills instruction
    3: Used in oral life skills instruction
    4: Used in literacy classes only
    0: Not used in adult informal education

19. Language use in popular press
    1: Used in publications throughout country
    2: Used in centrally-based publications with national distribution
    3: Used only in regional and local publications
    4: Used in clandestine publications only
    0: Not used

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - c

20. Language used in radio/TV transmission across national borders?
YES (1) NO (0)

21. Language use in radio broadcasting
1: Language used broadcasting thoughout country
2: Language used in centrally-based national broadcasts
3: Language used in local broadcasting only
3: Language used in clandestine broadcasting only
0: Language not used in radio broadcasting

22. Language use in TV broadcasting
1: Language used in telecasting throughout country
2: Language used in centrally-based national telecasting
3: Language used regional and local telecasting only
0: Language not used in TV

23. Language use in film
1: Language used in indigenous film-making
2: Foreign-language films dubbed/subtitled into language
0: Language not used in films

24. Business/Professional use - written
1: Sole official language in business and professional communications
2: One of the official languages in business and professional communication
0: Not used

25. Business/Professional use - oral
1: Used in trade and commerce throughout country
2: Used in national trade and commerce only
3: Used only in local trade and commerce

26. Language use in intellectual circles
1: Language used in indigenous scholarly publications
2: Language used in formal scholarly discussion
0: Language not used

27. Alphabet situation
1: Established standardized alphabet exists.
2: Alphabet developed, no standardization
3: Competing alphabets exist
0: No alphabet exists
FOOTNOTE: TYPE OF ALPHABET USED

28. Status of indigenous literature
1: Established written tradition exists
2: Literature tradition emerging
3: Popular literature exists
0: No written literature exists

29. Language used in official public signs, notices: YES (1) NO (0)

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - d

30. Teaching materials for English speakers
    1: Wide range of teaching materials exists
    2: Narrow range of teaching materials exists
    0: No teaching materials exist
    FOOTNOTE: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

31. Dictionaries for English speakers
    1: Wide range of bilingual dictionaries exists
    2: Narrow range of dictionaries exists
    0: No dictionaries exist
    FOOTNOTE: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY